

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT ISLAMABAD 7507 ACTION SECSTATE 17 AUG

QUOTE

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 7507

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FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, SOV, AF, BG

SUBJECT: BHUTTO REPORTS DISCUSSION WITH SOVIET

AMBASSADOR ABOUT AFGHANISTAN AND
BANGLADESH AND HIS OWN VIEWS OF NEW
BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT

REF: ISLAMABAD 7433

1. BHUTTO TELEPHONED LAST NIGHT WITH THE OPENING
REMARK THAT HE KNEW WE WEREN'T BAD GUYS AND DIDN'T
PULL THE COUP IN BANGLADESH, BUT THAT THE SOVIETS
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SEEMED TO THINK OTHERWISE. I SAID I HAD PREDICTED

THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD MAKE SUCH AN ACCUSATION AS SOON AS I READ THAT THE NEW PRESIDENT OF BANGLADESH WAS KNOWN TO BE PRO-WESTERN AND NOT ALL THAT FOND OF THE RUSSIANS. (I DIDN'T ADD THAT I ALSO THOUGHT THE INDIANS MIGHT BE SIMILARLY INCLINED.)

2. BHUTTO WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT DUE TO HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH BANGLADESH HE HADN'T SEEN SOVIET AMBASSADOR AZIMOV HERE (REFTEL) UNTIL LATE YESTERDAY. HE SAID AS WE HAD SURMISED AZIMOV PLAYED DOWN THE REMARKS OF THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN KABUL (WE HAD TALKED ABOUT THIS SUBJECT BRIEFLY SINCE I SENT ABOVE REFTEL WHEN THE BHUTTOS ASKED THE TWO OF US TO COME TO THEIR RESIDENCE FOR A DRINK FOLLOWING THE PAK PRESIDENT'S INDEPENDENCE DAY RECEPTION ON THURSDAY. AT THAT TIME BHUTTO'S BEST ESTIMATE WAS CLOSE TO MY OWN GUESS MENTIONED IN THE LAST PARA OF REFTEL, EXCEPT THAT HE HAD GONE FURTHER AND WAS WONDERING HOW, IF OUR ASSUMPTION WAS CORRECT, HE COULD TURN IT TO ADVANTAGE AND GET SOME PLEDGE OR PUBLIC STATEMENT OUT OF THE SOVIETS TO SET THIS EPISODE STRAIGHT.)

3. I ASKED IF AZIMOV ACTED AS IF HE HAD HEARD ABOUT THE KABUL AFFAIR AND WAS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS. BHUTTO SAID HE ACTED AS IF HE HAD NOT HEARD OF THE SUBJECT BEFORE, BUT REMINDED ME THAT HE WAS A SMOOTHY. AZIMOV HAD SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION WISHED NO MORE THAN GOOD RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN, THAT THEIR DIFFERENCES WERE IN NO WAY INSURMOUNTABLE, THAT A MISUNDERSTANDING MUST HAVE OCCURRED IN KABUL, ETC.

4. I SAID IT SEEMED HE HAD VERY CONFLICTING VIEWS FROM TWO SOVIET AMBASSADORS AND INQUIRED IF I MIGHT ASK HOW HE HAD LEFT THE MATTER WITH AZIMOV. HE REPLIED THAT HE HAD MADE THIS POINT FORCEFULLY TO AZIMOV AND STATED IT WAS UP TO THE SOVIET UNION TO CLARIFY THIS MATTER FOR HIM AND LET HIM KNOW JUST WHERE HE STOOD AS REGARDS SOVIET POLICY ON MATTERS
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RAISED BY THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN KABUL. I DID NOT ASK HIM ON THE PHONE IF HE HAD ASKED FOR SPECIFICS. (ONE THING HE HAD IN MIND AT THE TIME OF OUR LAST TALK WAS TO ASK FOR PUBLIC AFFIRMATION FROM THE SOVIET UNION THAT THE DURAND LINE REPRESENTED THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN.)

5. BHUTTO SAID HIS CONVERSATION WITH AZIMOV TURNED

TO CURRENT HAPPENINGS IN BANGLADESH. HE SAID AZIMOV HAD CONTRADICTED HIS REMARK THAT IT WAS PURELY AN INTERNAL AFFAIR. AZIMOV, ACCORDING TO BHUTTO, SAID IT WAS FAR FROM AN INTERNAL AFFAIR, AND THAT THE EVIDENCE THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS INVOLVED IN IT WAS COMPLETELY KNOWN TO THEM AND QUITE SELF-EVIDENT. BHUTTO SAID HE TOLD AZIMOV THAT HE DOUBTED THIS VERY MUCH.

6. I SAID THAT DETENTE HAD REACHED A LOW EBB INDEED SOME TIME AGO BETWEEN AZIMOV AND MYSELF WHEN HE HAD HAD PUBLISHED AN OFFICIAL TASS NEWS RELEASE IN KARACHI THAT WE HAD KILLED FAISAL, AND I HAD CONFRONTED HIM WITH THE EVIDENCE. JOKINGLY I SAID HE (BHUTTO) HAD RECOGNIZED THE NEW REGIME IN BANGLADESH SO FAST THAT I HAD WONDERED WHETHER THIS WOULD DRAW SUSPICION TO HIM. HE LAUGHED AND SAID HE HAD THOUGHT OF THAT HIMSELF BUT EVERYONE KNEW HE HAD NOBODY THERE. SERIOUSLY HE ADDED THAT WITH ALL THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND HE DIDN'T SEE HOW HE COULD LET OTHER NATIONS (HE MENTIONED POSSIBLY LIBYA AND SAUDI ARABIA) GET AHEAD OF PAKISTAN. HE SAID HE KNOWS THE NEW PRESIDENT WELL AND THINKS RELATIONS CAN BE BETTER. HE ALSO HOPES THIS CAN EXTEND TO IRAN AND TURKEY AND WITH THE WEST IN GENERAL. I SAID THAT WOULD BE A VERY GOOD DEVELOPMENT INDEED.

7. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO MOSCOW, KABUL AND DACCA. BYROADE UNQUOTE SISCO

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